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For information

UNICEF Core Corporate Commitments in emergencies

Summary

This report was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1997/7 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1), and as a follow-up to document E/ICEF/1997/7 on "Children and women in emergencies: strategic priorities and operational concerns for UNICEF", which confirmed the UNICEF commitment to partnership in emergency action and to the special protection of victims of armed conflict, disasters and all forms of violence.

The present report draws upon the diverse experiences of UNICEF in recent crises and elaborates on the UNICEF approach to ensuring an effective response to the needs of children and women affected by unstable situations, through mutually reinforcing actions in the areas of humanitarian policy, global advocacy and humanitarian response. The report also addresses the issue of humanitarian response through a set of "Core Corporate Commitments" (CCCs), in which capacities to forecast and respond to crises and/or unstable situations are mainstreamed into the programming and operational approach of UNICEF at country, regional and global levels. A matrix is included which outlines the four components of CCCs and defines the parameters of these commitments.

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I. Introduction

1. The present document is a follow-up to the report on "Children and women in emergencies: strategic priorities and operational concerns for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/7), which was presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 1997. The main elements outlined in the document confirmed the commitment of UNICEF to work in partnership with United Nations and other agencies in emergencies, and to ensure the protection of victims of armed conflict, disasters and all forms of violence.

2. The central role of UNICEF in unstable situations is the implementation of programme activities for children and women, with particular emphasis on advocacy; assessment and coordination; and care and protection of vulnerable children. In these efforts, UNICEF implements an integrated approach in meeting the rights and needs of children and women in crisis, based on recognition of the complex range of factors and the relationships between physical and emotional security, social and cognitive development, and health and nutritional status. This integrated approach provides a wide perspective for assessing and addressing the needs of children and women in a humanitarian context.

3. The diversity of experience gained by UNICEF over the past several years in implementing this approach has highlighted the organization's commitment to providing support to children and women affected by unstable situations, through mutually reinforcing actions in the areas of humanitarian policy, global advocacy and humanitarian response.

A. Humanitarian policy

4. The mandate of UNICEF calls on the organization to collaborate closely with national Governments, other humanitarian actors within the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ensure the protection of, and special assistance to, children in crises and unstable situations. In the mission statement, as contained in document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.2 and adopted by the Executive Board in decision 1996/1 (E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1), the role of UNICEF in the protection of children is clearly articulated: "UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children — victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation ... . UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children." Particular focus has been placed on ensuring that the position of UNICEF in humanitarian affairs is represented and furthered at the policy level, both within the organization and in various inter-agency forums. Special emphasis has been placed on the inclusion of the protection concerns of children and women within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

5. UNICEF continues to develop policies and strategies for the protection of children and women in unstable situations, working closely with its partners at field and global levels. Action in this regard includes the promotion of instruments of protection and international standards of humanitarian assistance; development of inter-agency policies on the protection of the internally displaced and against the proliferation of small arms; development of field-based initiatives for internally displaced persons; development of guidelines for landmine awareness and education; policies and standards for support to unaccompanied and separated children; standards for protection of children from the effects of sanctions; and training on international standards and guiding principles for humanitarian action and peacekeeping in support of children and women in times of crisis.

B. Global advocacy

6. As described in document E/ICEF/1997/7, the focus of UNICEF global advocacy is the basic humanitarian obligation to protect children and women against the effects of natural and man-made disasters and armed conflict. The rigorous application of existing standards covering the rights of children is sought, as are specific assurances of access to humanitarian assistance and an end to the deliberate targeting of children.

7. UNICEF partnerships and action on behalf of children affected by armed conflict are guided by the organization's Anti-War Agenda, by the findings of the report of Graca Machel on the "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children", and by the Peace and Security Agenda for Children, as outlined by the Executive Director at the Security Council Open Briefing on the Protection of Civilians, held in February 1999. The

main areas of action are: a global call for an end to the use of children as soldiers; increased protection for humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel; humanitarian landmine action; protection of children from the effects of sanctions; inclusion of specific provisions for children in peace-building efforts; an end to the impunity of war crimes, especially against children; and early warning and preventive action in support of children. In this regard, the adoption of two landmark instruments, Security Council resolution 1261 of 25 August 1999 on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Security Council resolution 1265 of 17 September 1999 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, are clear indications of the growing prominence of children's issues on the Security Council agenda.

8. UNICEF continues to promote the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in close collaboration with United Nations and NGO partners, to establish 18 as the minimum age of recruitment and participation in hostilities. UNICEF has strongly advocated the ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and Their Destruction, which entered into force in March 1999. In coordination with the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNICEF has been designated responsible, within the United Nations system, for promoting landmine awareness worldwide; and working to assure universality of the convention, as well as global adherence to its principles. In all areas of global advocacy, UNICEF works in close collaboration with its key United Nations partners, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

C. Humanitarian response

9. UNICEF efforts in helping to provide care and protection for children and women in unstable situations is derived from the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international legal standards. UNICEF has completed a series of internal activities to reinforce its capacity to respond rapidly, appropriately and effectively to emergencies that threaten the survival and well-being of children and women. The underlying principles of these activities are based on the following: (a) humanitarian response strategies must be integrated with political and advocacy initiatives as part of a comprehensive, rights-based approach to programming; (b) a clear coordination framework — both internally and within an inter-agency context — must be established as quickly as possible; and (c) initial response and life-saving assistance should move rapidly towards medium- and long-term solutions, with an emphasis on community-based recovery strategies.

II. Core Corporate Commitments

A. The Martigny Global Consultation

10. The present document addresses the UNICEF response to crises at the programmatic level and, specifically, Core Corporate Commitments (CCCs) to ensure effective action at the onset of crises. The rapid proliferation of economic crises, natural disasters and complex emergencies poses a major challenge to UNICEF. The humanitarian, human rights and political implications of these emergencies have challenged the organization to strengthen its strategies in order to ensure the survival, protection and development of children.

11. In September 1998, UNICEF convened the Martigny Global Consultation in Switzerland to formulate a set of recommendations to improve UNICEF responsiveness to children in unstable situations, within the context of a mainstreamed programme approach. It was agreed that the organization should enhance its capacity to predict and respond to a changing global environment, marked by increased frequency and intensity of civil strife, armed conflict and natural disasters. To achieve this end, a more predictable and effective response to sudden changes or crises, and more flexible programming and operational procedures, were seen as necessary.

12. Since the consultation, improvements have been made in organizational capacity in four critical areas: (a) coordinated action in support of children and women; (b) assessment and vulnerability analysis;

(c) effective delivery of UNICEF CCCs and competencies to ensure life-saving support, especially at the onset of crises, in order to advocate and sustain support throughout the transition from relief to development; and (d) planning, management and monitoring of programme responses to the rights and needs of children and women.

B. Key elements of Core Corporate Commitments

13. A primary outcome of the Martigny Consultation was the identification of a minimum set of CCCs that constitutes the organization's initial response to protection and care of children and women in unstable situations. The CCCs fall into four principal areas:

(a) Rapid assessment: The ability to conduct an immediate assessment of the situation of children and women in areas of crisis; and an objective assessment of the measures needed to ensure effective UNICEF country office management of the situation, and of the UNICEF response;

(b) Coordination: The capacity to assume a coordinating role for sectoral support and to initiate appropriate strategies for initial response in collaboration with United Nations and other partners;

(c) Programme commitments: Policy and programme guidance in the required interventions to assist field staff in designing and implementing responses to the assessed situation of children and women, in cooperation with national counterparts and international partners. This commitment entails a process of continued monitoring and evaluation of UNICEF humanitarian activities; and

(d) Operational commitments: Organizational capacity, procedures and resources (funds, staff and supplies) to ensure that the appropriate programmatic response will be available on a timely basis. This includes the ability to provide humanitarian coordination in selected instances.

(See annex for details.)

C. Implementation of Core Corporate Commitments

14. CCC implementation entails accountability for preparedness and support at all levels of the organization.

Country office

15. Country office responsibilities include:

(a) Primary responsibility for early warning, assessment, preparedness and response in the country;

(b) Assessment of the preparedness and response capacity of partners;

(c) Primary responsibility for liaison and coordination with other United Nations agencies involved in emergency response, including OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, WHO and the inter-agency coordination mechanisms established in emergency-affected areas and in capitals;

(d) Primary responsibility for maintaining and strengthening relations with donors at the country level, in order to share information and increase collaboration;

(e) Identification of specific areas where support is required from regional offices and headquarters;

(f) Contribution to regional and/or global efforts to provide support for crises in other countries;

(g) Development of closer collaborative arrangements with partners, and formulation of effective mass media strategies; and

(h) Timely monitoring and evaluation, and reporting on developments and response mechanisms.

Regional office

16. Regional office responsibilities include:

(a) Primary responsibility for preparedness and coordination of response in the region (e.g., cross- or multi-country emergencies);

(b) Coordination or provision of training in emergency early-warning preparedness and response for country offices;

(c) Integration of vulnerability analysis and preparedness into the country programming processes

(including situation analyses and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs));

(d) Preparation of regional standby arrangements and/or stockpiles of critical inputs needed for rapid deployment;

(e) Identification of human resources in the region, and maintenance of a roster of available staff and consultants, for rapid deployment;

(f) Identification of specific areas where support is required from headquarters (including Supply Division in Copenhagen);

(g) Contribution to global efforts to provide the support required for crises in other regions; and

(h) Oversight, monitoring and evaluation of the programmatic response at country level.

Headquarters

17. Headquarters responsibilities include:

(a) Coordination or provision of global training in emergency preparedness and response;

(b) Preparation of global standby arrangements for critical inputs so that they are available for rapid deployment;

(c) Provision of appropriate programme guidance and support, including review of programme content and clearance of the Consolidated Appeal Process;

(d) Integration of vulnerability analysis and preparedness into global guidelines for country programming processes (including situation analyses and UNDAFs);

(e) Identification of global human resources and maintenance of a roster of available staff and consultants, for rapid deployment when needed;

(f) Definition of UNICEF global policies, rules/regulations and procedures;

(g) Identification of specific areas where support is required from various regions and headquarters offices;

(h) Coordination of the efforts of operational support divisions (Division of Financial and Administrative Management, Division of Human Resources, Division of Communication, Information Technology Division, Supply Division, Office of Internal Audit) required during crisis situations in all regions;

(i) Provision of liaison and coordination with other United Nations agencies involved in emergency responses, including OCHA, UNHCR, UNHCHR, WFP, WHO, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the inter-agency coordination mechanisms in New York and Geneva;

(j) Support of country offices and regional offices in analysis and early warning of potential or impending crises, including immediate notification of crises reported in the international media;

(k) Coordination of security of staff in the preparedness phase and when a crisis occurs, including liaison with the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD);

(l) Close collaboration with sister agencies in the identification and training of humanitarian coordinators; and

(m) Provision of advice and guidance, and assurance of capacities in country offices, for effective United Nations coordination.

Annex

CORE CORPORATE COMMITMENTS:
IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

A. RAPID ASSESSMENT

In consultation and collaboration with partners, UNICEF will:

1. Carry out a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women. This situation analysis will be undertaken from a gender and child rights perspective, and will draw upon baseline data compiled in the preparedness phase.

2. Compare general assessment of situation with specific implications for UNICEF. Programme sectors of concern to UNICEF are: health and nutrition; education; child protection; and water supply and sanitation.

   - Compile basic data required by UNICEF to analyse and plan, including: mapping of likely population displacements, logistics capacities, potential partners and Geographic Information Systems.
   - Determine organization's capacity to function in the field: ascertain presence of telecommunications infrastructure, vehicles, office premises, warehousing, access and mobility.
   - Establish organizational structure for response, staff functions and staffing plans. Identify partners; logistical arrangements and options; telecommunications/information technology and other equipment requirements; and military liaison needs.
   - Assess financial and administrative capacity in country, including sources of cash, banking and financial systems, methods of disbursement of funds and security of assets.

3. Undertake a rapid assessment of staffing requirements, both for UNICEF and on an inter-agency basis, and identify possible needs for staff in:

   - Programme coordination
   - Operations and security
   - Supply and logistics
   - Monitoring and evaluation
   - Communications
   - Telecommunications, information technology
   - Finance and administration

4. Ensure availability of a standard package of documents in field offices and at headquarters at the onset of an emergency. Package should include information and guidance on standard procedures for operations, administration, finance, security, supply and logistics, human resources, telecommunications and office set-up checklists, as well as the Programme, Policy and Procedures Manual.

5. Undertake rapid review of security preparedness in country and field offices and provide appropriate guidance.

   - Determine exact nature of crisis, potential developments and the implications of both for staff security. If there are any staff in location, establish their exact whereabouts; determine safety, extent of injuries and local capacities to treat staff; and arrange for medical evacuation.
   - Determine security implications of deploying additional staff to the affected country/area.
   - Review security plans, including relocation, evacuation and safe haven alternatives, with the country and regional offices.

B. COORDINATION

In collaboration with all partners, UNICEF will:

1. Maintain capacity to assume a coordinating role for:

   - Life-saving public health interventions in support of children and women;
   - Provision of infant feeding and nutrition rehabilitation services for children;
   - Child protection and psychosocial support;
   - Unaccompanied children;
   - Education.

2. Initiate strategies for inter-agency coordination in areas of primary concern to UNICEF.

3. Identify partners, in particular United Nations agencies and NGOs, for interventions in the areas of health, nutrition, education, child protection and water and sanitation.

C. PROGRAMME COMMITMENTS

HEALTH AND NUTRITION
To ensure the provision of basic health care services, including medical assistance for children and women, in collaboration with all partners, UNICEF will:
1. Provide essential supplies, including: emergency health kits (essential drugs); oral rehydration salts; basic clinical equipment (e.g., supplementary health kits); fortified nutritional products; micronutrient tablets (vitamin A, iron and folic acid, multiple micronutrients); and blankets.
2. Provide measles vaccinations and critical inputs, for example, vaccines, cold-chain equipment, syringes, training, and financial support for advocacy and for the immunization of children between 6 months and 12 years of age among target population. A companion dose of vitamin A will be provided as required.
3. Provide tetanus toxoid and such other critical inputs as vaccines, cold-chain equipment, syringes, training, and financial support for advocacy and for the immunization of pregnant and lactating women, as well as adolescent girls.
4. Based on rapid assessments and agreed roles and responsibilities among key partners, initiate and support therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes for children and pregnant and lactating women.
5. Ensure the provision of messages on health and nutrition issues, including the importance of breastfeeding and safe motherhood practices.
EDUCATION
To ensure the re-establishment of basic education services for children and women, in collaboration with all partners, UNICEF will:
1. Establish "safe environments for children" for learning, recreation and psychosocial support.
2. Initiate basic education services, in collaboration with communities and camp and local government authorities.

3. Provide education kits and basic learning materials for primary school children.
CHILD PROTECTION
To ensure the protection, care and well-being of children and women, in collaboration with all partners, UNICEF will:
1. Ensure the identification, registration and medical screening of unaccompanied children, with priority given to preventing separation of children under five; ensure the registration of all parents who have lost their children; and provide leadership and support for photo tracing and for care and protection of separated children.
2. Provide orientation and financial support to local partners and social workers involved in tracing, care and reunification; and ensure the provision of tracing kits for partners.
3. Where necessary, initiate the process of development, refinement and field testing of appropriate mine awareness materials for implementation of mine awareness programmes.
4. Identify and address violation of children's rights through advocacy and work with United Nations and NGO partners.
5. Develop, provide and strengthen psychosocial support services for children and their caregivers.
WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION
To ensure the initial provision of water and sanitation for children and women, in collaboration with all partners, UNICEF will:
1. Ensure the availability of a minimum safe water supply, through provision of technical and material support to external implementing partners.
2. Provide bleach, chlorine or purification tablets, and detailed user and safety instructions in the local language.

3. Provide jerry cans, or appropriate alternative, with user instructions and messages, in the local language, on handling of water and disposal of excreta and solid waste.
4. Provide soap and disseminate key hygiene messages on the dangers of cholera and other water- and excreta-related diseases.
5. Facilitate safe excreta and solid waste disposal through provision of: shovels; cash for contracting local service companies to dispose of solid waste; messages on the importance of keeping excreta (including infant faeces) buried and away from habitations and public areas; messages on disposal of human and animal corpses; and instructions on, and support for, construction of trench and pit latrines.

D. OPERATIONAL COMMITMENTS

HUMAN RESOURCES
To ensure the deployment of required staff to support programmes for children and women, in collaboration with all partners, UNICEF will:
1. Initiate contact with regional and country offices and with external partners, such as agencies with standby arrangements, to establish the availability of staff in location; and arrange deployment.
2. Establish a screening mechanism and checklist to ensure that all core staff deployed to emergencies have received orientation and briefings in relevant areas.
3. If relocation and evacuation are required, make necessary arrangements to support relocated staff.
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
To ensure the establishment of telecommunications, VSATs (Very Small Aperture Terminals) and Programme Management Systems (PROMS) in emergency areas, UNICEF will:
1. Based upon the rapid assessment, identify and ensure the supply of specific telecommunications needs for the office.

2. Establish PROMS in emergency areas, and/or activate structures at headquarters and regional office to run PROMS in emergency and remote locations; and ensure the presence of trained UNICEF staff responsible for PROMS.
SUPPLIES AND LOGISTICS
To ensure the availability of supplies and appropriate logistics support for effective and timely fulfilment of the programme CCCs, UNICEF will:
1. Mobilize stock of essential supplies (programme and support) from UNICEF Supply Division, using available funds, which may include Emergency Programme Funds or Central Emergency Reserve Funds.
2. Activate existing standby arrangements with manufacturers and transporters for specific emergency requirements at all levels.
3. Activate emergency local procurement procedures (notifying vendors, revalidating tenders and requesting local procurement authority).
4. Determine cross-border procurement capacities and possibility of collaboration with the regional office.
5. Review arrangements with other United Nations agencies for shared logistics capacities, including use of warehousing.
FUND-RAISING / DONOR RELATIONS
To ensure that resources are made available to fulfil the programme commitments through the Consolidated Appeal Process, individual donor appeals and Flash Alerts, UNICEF will:
1. Initiate donor contact in order to process proposals, donor appeals and Flash Alerts effectively and immediately.
2. Ensure the availability of information packages on contribution management and reporting formats at regional and country office levels and in the emergency area.
3. At the onset of crisis, designate individual focal points in field and at headquarters to assign responsibility for donor liaison, proposal drafting and reporting.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS
To ensure that an appropriate and effective mass media and communications strategy is developed and implemented, with the concerned country offices, highlighting the effects of the crisis on children and women, UNICEF will:
1. Develop and implement a communications strategy and plan of action for media relations during the emergency.
2. Develop an advocacy strategy and plan of action, within a child rights framework, for the particular emergency; this includes the use of appropriate mass media techniques.
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
To ensure the establishment of an efficient financial and administrative management structure, with regional office and headquarters support, for effective implementation of the programme CCCs, UNICEF will:
1. In consultation with headquarters, establish appropriate fund management and disbursement modalities.
2. Ensure that internal oversight systems are in place and functional from the onset of the crisis. In particular, formulate a checklist of immediate measures to be undertaken and assure measures are carried out; and formulate and implement a checklist of minimum procedures to be followed.
3. Ensure availability of checklists to guide representatives and operations officers on best operational and staff management practices in emergencies.